



The CLP's Approach to Selecting Core Participant Households

Background

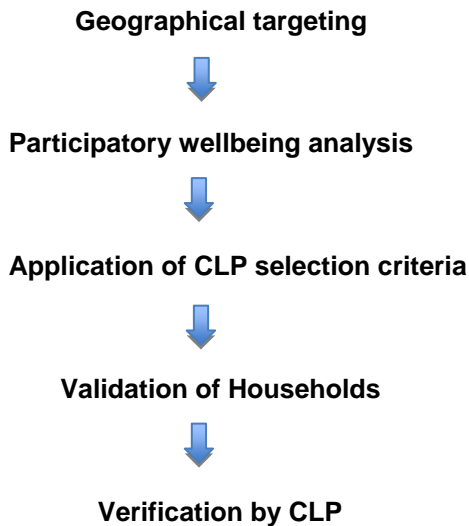
The Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) is co-funded by UKaid through the Department for International Development and the Australian Government (AusAID).

The CLP aims to improve livelihoods, incomes, and food security of over one million people living on island *chars* in North West Bangladesh. The second phase of the programme (CLP-2, 2010-2016) will focus on 67,000 extreme poor households living on island *chars*, known as core participant households (CPHHs). These households will receive a package of support comprising a productive asset of their choice (usually cattle) to the value of Tk 16,000¹, stipends, livelihoods and social development training, access to a raised plinth, water and sanitation, and essential healthcare services.

How the CLP Selects CPHHs

Careful selection is crucial to ensure that funds and project activities are directed to the intended target group. The CLP has developed rigorous selection criteria² and follows a series of selection processes outlined in figure 1 and table 2 to minimise inclusion and exclusion errors.

Figure 1: The stages in selection of CPHHs



¹ This may vary by cohort.

² Hodson, R (2006), The Chars Livelihoods Programme: the Story and Strategy So Far.

What is extreme poverty?

In rural Bangladesh, the extreme poverty line is based on an income of Tk 18 per person per day. The extreme poor typically rely on wage labour, have little or no productive asset base, and are prone to many shocks such as flooding, erosion, and illness. They lack secure employment and have little or no access to healthcare, education, credit and social safety nets. The number of female headed households, elderly and households supporting a disabled household member are disproportionately high within the extreme poor.

1. Geographical Targeting

The CLP works with households living on remote island *chars* in eight riverine districts of North West Bangladesh, one of the poorest areas of the country. The districts covered under CLP-2 are Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Pabna, Tangail and Jamalpur.

The physical isolation of the *chars* from markets and services, limited employment opportunities, vulnerability to flooding and erosion, as well as seasonal hunger (*monga*) mean that the *chars* dwellers are among the poorest of the poor. Various surveys³ have been conducted under CLP-2 to estimate the number of households living in *char* districts and the potential number of CPHHs.

2. Participatory Wellbeing Analysis

Participants are first selected through participatory wellbeing analysis based on the community's observations of relative poverty.

Field staff from the CLP's Implementing Organisations (IMOs) meet with the village population and use participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, including social mapping and wellbeing analysis to identify the poorest households.

One limitation of this method is that communities who have undertaken PRA exercises before may try to manipulate the process in an attempt to receive potential benefits from the CLP. However, all staff are trained in order to minimise this. Ineligible households that are selected at this stage will be filtered out in the next stage when Community Development Officers (CDOs) apply the CLP selection criteria.

3. Applying CLP Selection Criteria and Validation

Using the results of the PRA, CDOs visit the poorest households (as identified by the community themselves) to collect household information in relation to CLP selection criteria, and compile a primary list of CPHHs. During this process CDOs also look for and include any households meeting the CLP criteria who may have been

³ Kenward, S and Islam, R (2010), CLP-2 Districts: An Assessment of the Number of Core Participant Households and Island Char Villages; McIvor, N (2011), An Assessment of Potential Numbers of CPHHs Living on Island Chars in Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi and Natore.





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placed in a higher wellbeing group by the community during wellbeing analysis.

Senior IMO staff (Community Development Supervisors [CDSs], Programme Managers and sometimes Executive Directors) conduct door-to-door visits to check and validate each proposed CPHH against the CLP's selection criteria. The CLP uses several proxies for extreme poverty, which are set out in table 1.

These criteria are to some extent objectively verifiable, understood by the IMO staff and have been relatively easy to implement in practice. The limitations of the selection criteria are discussed in more detail below.

4. Verification

Finally, CLP senior staff verify a random sample of the households to ensure they meet the CLP criteria.

Verification is conducted by two persons teams led by CLP international and national management (Directors, CLP Unit Managers assisted by CLP District Managers). The teams visit a random sample of 5-10% of households, interview the potential participants and check their status to ensure that they meet the criteria.

If during verification, selection errors are found to amount to more than 5% of the sample, then the relevant IMO is asked to re-check and re-submit their complete list of proposed households. If CLP senior staff are suspicious regarding the selection of any household, they may also ask IMOs to re-verify their entire list.

In general, accuracy during selection is found to be good. For example, in the first cohort of CLP-2 (involving 5,004 households), only 0.4% of households were found not to meet the selection criteria during verification (1 household in a sample of 255).

If any changes are detected between the selection and verification period (normally a few months), the IMOs can exclude or include any households based on whether the household meets the CLP selection criteria at that time.



Verification of a CLP 2.3 household

What are the CLP Selection Criteria?

During CLP-1 (2004-2010), in consultation with the concerned stakeholders and donors, the CLP developed a set of proxy indicators to define extreme poor households. The CLP has continued to use these same criteria during CLP-2 (Table 1).

Table 1: CLP's selection criteria

Criteria	Definition
1. Char Household	Resident for at least 6 months in a village which has been classified by CLP as an island <i>char</i> .
2. Landless	Absolutely zero decimals of land ownership including homestead land, and having no access to agricultural land including share cropped land or land to be inherited under Bangladesh law. Households renting homestead land are still eligible.
3. Livestock-less	Selected households may not own more than 2 goats/sheep, 10 fowl & 1 shared cattle.
4. Credit-less	Have no loan outstanding from <i>any</i> microfinance or credit programme.
5. Asset-less & Income-less	Are not receiving cash or asset grants from <i>any</i> other asset transfer programme.
6. Participation	Are willing to attend weekly group meetings, participate in a livelihoods programme and show how the asset will be cared for.

How effective are the CLP's Current Selection Criteria?

A poverty assessment conducted by CLP's Innovation Monitoring and Learning Division (IML) in 2011 found that the CLP's selection criteria are broadly in line with the characteristics of the poorest, as defined by the communities themselves⁴.

Limitations

Lessons were learnt from the selection process in CLP-1 that resulted in some initial biases by IMOs towards younger and healthier households that were thought to have more economic potential. However, there was a marked improvement in successive rounds of targeting⁵.

One limitation is the difficulty in ascertaining ownership of land and other assets, as the CLP relies on the truthfulness of the households and the surrounding community. The wellbeing analysis exercise involving community members helps to overcome these limitations.

Exclusion of the extreme poor may occur if a very vulnerable household owns a small piece of land or has

⁴ Blackie, R, Kenward, S, and Islam, R. (2011), Review of CLP's Selection and Graduation Criteria.

⁵ Hodson, R (2009), Reflections on the CLP Approach to Reducing Extreme Poverty, the Story Continues.





two share cattle; yet a cut-off point is necessary. Inclusion error may occur if a household migrates from one CLP working area to another, however this is very rare. Further details on inclusion and exclusion errors are outlined in table 3

- Key Points:**
- The CLP successfully targets the extreme poor *char* dwellers, who are identified using proxy indicators;
 - The CLP employs a range of methods in selecting eligible participants;
 - CLP's criteria are broadly in line with the community's own definition of extreme poverty;
 - The CLP's selection criteria and verification of selected participants ensures that inclusion and exclusion errors are minimal.

Table 2: Steps in the Selection of CPHH's

Step	How	Tools	Participants	Timeframe
Step 1 Develop specific criteria	Senior CLP staff members set <i>char</i> specific criteria at committee meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field research • Review secondary data • Stakeholder consultations • Donor consultations • Committee meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Management Team led by Team Leader • Donors • Stakeholders 	N/A
Step 2 Identification of extreme poor households	Consensus wellbeing analysis based on community observations of relative poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMO field staff (CDOs, CDSs) undertake participatory wellbeing analysis and village mapping with total village population • Door-to-door visits • Key informant interviews (KIIs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMO field staff • Union Parishad council members • Local elite • All village households in the community 	2 weeks
Step 3 Validation	First level validation by senior IMO staff who revisit selected CPHHs and apply CLP criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door visits in which senior IMO staff check each proposed CPHH against CLP selection criteria • KIIs • Set of selection criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior IMO staff • Proposed CPHHs in the community 	2 weeks
Step 4 Verification	At least 5% of all CPHHs are randomly verified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household visits • KIIs with randomly selected CPHHs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 person teams led by CLP international and national management team • CPHHs 	1 day for 1 team to cover 300 - 500 CPHHs
Step 5 Baseline survey ⁶	Baseline data on a sample of 400 CPHHs are collected. A census of all households is also conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standardised questionnaire developed by IML is used for both the sample and the census 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample: outsourced company • Census: CDOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample: 20-25days • Census: 6 months
Step 6 Group formation	Groups are formed with the selected CPHHs, usually 18-25 women per group. The groups are based on geographical areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with CPHHs • Observations and assessments of the geographic position of CPHHs' homesteads and the distance between households (following the CLP's 'Social Development Guidelines') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDOs supervised by the CDSs 	2 weeks
Step 7 Training and asset purchase	After an orientation meeting and a one day Livestock Training by Livelihoods Unit, CPHHs are taken to a cattle market for cattle or undertake other asset purchases, depending on the household's choice.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Office and District CLP Livelihoods staff • IMO Livelihoods Staff • CPHHs 	1 day for each meeting

⁶ The baseline survey is conducted after verification and before group formation, yet it remains independent of the selection process.





Table 3: Inclusion and Exclusion Error Explained

	What does this mean?	How might this arise?	What systems do we have in place to try to minimise this?	To what extent does this occur?
Inclusion error	A household that does not meet the CLP criteria but is included e.g. the household owns some land, or owns more assets than the maximum as outlined in the CLP criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption • Human error • Households not telling the truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community wellbeing analysis • House to house validation • Verification 	The cohort 2.1 and 2.2 baseline surveys found that among the 815 sampled CPHHs, 40 households actually had land – an average inclusion error of 5%. It must however be noted that a household's status may have changed between selection and the baseline survey.
Exclusion error	A household that does meet the CLP criteria but is not included e.g. the household is land-less, asset-less and job-less and meets all of the other selection criteria but is not selected as a CLP CPHH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household is absent during selection process • Community manipulation • Human error 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community wellbeing analysis • Door-to-door validation • Verification: during verification we also look for households who have not been selected but who might meet the CLP criteria. 	<p>The average number of households per village is 393. On average, the CLP works with 22% of the households in any one village. It is estimated that less than 1% of the households may be missed due to exclusion error.</p> <p>During the first cohort of the CLP-2, approximately 5 of the sampled households were added during verification as they had not been identified earlier in the selection process. This exclusion error applies to only a small number of households which are identified on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>The only method of finding the true exclusion error would be to repeat this selection exercise in a village and visit all the households, to check how accurate the first selection was. However households' situations may have changed slightly, there may have been movement of people in or out of the village and there is no guarantee that errors wouldn't occur in a second round of selection in addition to CLP's resource constraints.</p>